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Guides to English Classics Series

# AS YOU LIKE IT

(Shakespeare)

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# GUIDES TO ENGLISH CLASSICS

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## AS YOU LIKE IT

### THE DRAMA

The drama is a type of literature that represents human actions and characters, actually impersonated by actors before an audience. As in the short story, the tale, and the novel, a narrative is unfolded; the drama differs only in the method of presentation. In the three former, the author, from an impersonal point of view, tells us what the characters say and do and think; or at best, he has one of the characters in his own person tell the story. In the play, however, the author presents the characters in the persons of actual, living actors, who really say and do the things by which the plot is developed. The play, then, is made primarily to be seen and heard, not read. This fact must be borne in mind when studying any printed drama. As we read, we have not the help of the artists of the stage to make us understand the incidents and appreciate the emotions of the persons in the play. Nor have we the aid of the comments and explanations of the author, as in the case of a piece of narrative fiction. Hence there is greater need of a lively imagination in the perusal of a play than of any other kind of literature. We must try to visualize what is happening; and we must be able to infer traits of character from the conversation of the persons of the drama.

**As You Like It** belongs to the species of the drama called *Comedy*. The other main species is the *Tragedy*. It is sufficiently discriminative, though not critically accu-

rate, to define the one as a play that has a happy ending, and the other as a play that has a sad or violent ending. Usually, though not always, a comedy is humorous—full of amusing characters in funny situations. This is true of *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Midsummer Night's Dream*, but is not true of *The Merchant of Venice*, *Winter's Tale*, nor *The Tempest*.

### The Age of Shakespeare

**As You Like It** was written more than three hundred years ago. Fully to understand the play, then, it is necessary to know at least a little of the time in which the author lived. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1559-1603), England had a great intellectual awakening. This was the result of several new forces. The "revival of learning" brought to general knowledge the beautiful literatures of Greece and Rome, led to the establishment of universities in England and on the Continent, and fostered a great throng of poets and dramatists. At the same time a wonderful series of explorations and adventures by sea and land took place, opening up new worlds in America and elsewhere. Then England grew mighty in empire, multiplied her colonies, vanquished all her enemies, and became mistress of the seas. As a result peace reigned in the land. The people grew prosperous, scholars and thinkers in all branches of knowledge increased, literature flourished. Such was the age that produced the world's greatest dramatist, Shakespeare.

### The London Theatres

The London theatres to us, accustomed to magnificence of decoration, furnishings, and lighting, would have

seemed bare and repellent. They were mostly round or octagonal structures of wood, consisting of three stories of galleries, surrounding an open place of level ground, called the "pit." The galleries were roofed, but the "pit" was open to the weather. The buildings accommodated about 1,500 spectators, of which those in the "pit" had to stand. The stage was a platform jutting out into the middle of the "pit," so that the "standees" were on three sides of it. About midway a curtain was drawn across the stage, dividing it into a "front stage" and a "rear stage." This allowed for the arranging of properties for the next scene behind the curtain, while one scene was being played in front. *There was no painted scenery* as in our modern stage, but an extensive use was made of properties of all kinds. The unpampered imaginations of the Elizabethan audience readily enabled them to see a fully furnished royal court in a throne and a few chairs, or accept a few scragged trees as a delectable forest. The costumes of the players were merely those of Elizabethan London, irrespective of the time or country of the play. A significant fact, in view of the masquerading of Rosalind, Viola, Portia, and other women in Shakespeare's plays, is that the women's parts were all played by boys. It is well to bear in mind that it was with limitations such as these—crudities they seem to us—that Shakespeare had to work.

**Date.**—*As You Like It* was first published in 1623, but, from the best evidence we can obtain, was probably written in 1599. It belongs to what is known as the "second period" of Shakespeare's work. Critics distinguish four periods in his development as a dramatist.

(1) The period of experimentation, before he had fully learned his art. Some of the plays of this period are very crude, but others, as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*, forecast the great things to come. (2) The period of the great histories and comedies, when he had acquired dramatic technique and deep insight into human nature. Besides *As You Like It*, great plays of this period are *Twelfth Night*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Henry IV*, and *Henry V*. (3) The period of great tragedies: *Julius Cæsar*, *Hamlet*, *Lear*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*. (4) Romantic tales of his later years: *Cymbeline*, *Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*.

**Source.**—Shakespeare always borrowed the plots for his plays from older plays, histories, or current works of fiction. The source of *As You Like It* is a novel by Thomas Lodge, published in 1590, called "*Rosalynde, Euphues Golden Legacy*." Shakespeare followed the story pretty closely, but added freely to the plot, and the characterization is entirely his own. He took a dull, lifeless story and made it alive with beauty, action, humor, and human nature.

## SYNOPSIS

**Act I.**—In the *first scene*, laid in an orchard of the De Boys house, Orlando and his servant Adam are discussing the unjust treatment accorded Orlando by his brother Oliver, who has failed to carry out the provisions of their father's will. Oliver enters and begins to upbraid his brother for idleness; a quarrel ensues, during which Orlando, stung by Oliver's insults, tries to lay violent hands upon him, demanding his share of

their father's estate. They are separated by Adam, and Oliver dismisses Orlando empty-handed, telling him to take Adam along with him.

When they have left, Charles, a wrestler, enters, informing Oliver, in reply to a question, that the good old duke has been banished by a wicked younger brother and has taken refuge with many of his lords in the Forest of Arden. Rosalind, the old duke's daughter, is retained at court as companion to her uncle's daughter Celia, to whom she is strongly attached. Charles now urges Oliver to restrain his brother Orlando from taking part in the wrestling match scheduled for the morrow, as he fears that the youth may be injured. Oliver, however, seeing a possible chance of getting rid of his brother, persuades Charles that Orlando is a villain of the deepest dye, and accordingly Charles promises to show him no mercy in the match.

The scene now changes (*scene 2*) to the lawn before the duke's palace, where Celia is vainly trying to cheer Rosalind's sorrow for her banished father by telling her that she should at least be thankful for not being parted from her friend. She adds, also, that as she is her father's only heir, she will, at his death, restore the usurped duchy to Rosalind.

At this point Touchstone, the court Jester, appears, summoning them to the duke. While the three are engaged in witty talk, a messenger arrives, announcing that a wrestling match is to take place at once on this very spot. Soon a flourish of trumpets announces the arrival of the usurping duke with his train, including Charles and Orlando. The girls try to persuade Orlando to withdraw

from the match, thinking him too young and slender for so formidable an opponent. Although touched by their solicitude, he firmly declines to withdraw. They then give him their best wishes for success, and Orlando, who has fallen in love with Rosalind at first sight, resolves to do his best to win.

In the bout that follows, Orlando throws Charles so violently that the wrestler is carried from the field unconscious. The usurper, on learning that Orlando is the son of Sir Rowland de Boys, a former close friend of the duke whom he has banished, leaves haughtily without congratulating the victor. To make up for this slight Rosalind gives Orlando the little golden chain from around her neck. Before Orlando can find words to thank her, she and Celia depart. A courtier now approaches Orlando and cautions him to leave as soon as possible, as the duke in his wrath may do him harm. Although eager to see more of Rosalind, Orlando decides that for his safety he must go away at once.

The *third scene* takes place in a room in the palace, where Celia is poking fun at Rosalind for having fallen in love with Orlando. The angry duke appears and orders Rosalind to leave his court at once, under penalty of death should she be found within twenty miles of it in ten days' time. When he has gone from the room, Celia declares that she will never live apart from her cousin but will go into banishment with her. They decide to disguise themselves, Celia under the name of Aliena as a peasant woman, and Rosalind as a boy, her page, and to seek refuge with the banished duke in the Forest of Arden. They agree to induce Touchstone to accompany them.



**Act II.**—The *first scene* serves to introduce the exiled duke and his followers in their care-free life in the Forest of Arden. Interest is aroused in the “melancholy Jaques” by the story told by one of the number of seeing him weeping and moralizing over the sufferings of a wounded deer.

In *scene 2* the usurping duke learns of the departure of his daughter with Rosalind and the Jester, and hears hints that they have joined Orlando. This news so incenses him that he summons Oliver, intending to demand from him the surrender of the runaways.

*Scene 3* takes place in Oliver’s house. Orlando and Adam plan to fly immediately from the wrath of Oliver and the duke.

In *scene 4*, Rosalind, Celia, and Touchstone have arrived foot-sore and exhausted in the Forest of Arden. While they are wondering what to do next, a couple of shepherds walk towards them. The younger, Silvius, is telling the aged Corin of his love for Phebe and her scorn of him. This talk of love reminds Rosalind of her love for Orlando, and occasions some witty remarks from Touchstone. When the youth has departed, the newcomers learn from Corin that there is a farm for sale in the neighborhood, and determine to purchase it.

*Scene 5* makes us further acquainted with the peculiar mind of the melancholy Jaques, and contains a delightful song by Amiens in praise of the life under the green-wood tree.

Orlando and Adam now (*scene 6*) arrive in the Forest. Both are faint from hunger, and Adam sinks down saying he cannot go another step. Orlando with comfort-

ing words leaves him beneath a tree, and rushes into the forest resolved to find food or lose his life in the attempt.

Meanwhile (*scene 7*) the duke and his companions have gathered to banquet upon the deer they have slain. Jaques entertains them with an account of his meeting with "a motley fool" in the forest, with whom he had an edifying conversation. At this point Orlando enters with drawn sword, demanding food for a starving man. The duke, having heard his story, bids him bring the old servant to the feast. While Orlando is gone on this errand, Jaques moralizes in his famous speech on the "Seven Ages of man."

As he finishes, Orlando re-enters with Adam, and all dine heartily together. The duke recognizes Orlando by his resemblance to his father Sir Rowland de Boys, and bids him welcome to Arden.

**Act III.**—*Scene 1* reverts to the usurping duke, who, upon Oliver's failure to produce his brother, declares Oliver's property confiscated and turns him out.

With *scene 2* we are back in the Forest for the remainder of the play. Orlando decorates the trees with verses in praise of Rosalind. Touchstone makes sport of the old shepherd Corin and his country life. Rosalind, still dressed as a boy, enters reading aloud one of the poems in her praise, which Touchstone parodies in a ridiculous manner. Then Celia comes in reading another poem which she has found. Rosalind is puzzled and asks who could have written the verses. After teasing her awhile, Celia tells her that Orlando is the author, and that she has seen and talked with him in the Forest. At

this point Orlando enters in conversation with Jaques, and the girls hide behind a tree to listen. Jaques chides Orlando for being in love and asks for a description of Rosalind, to which Orlando replies that she is "just as high as my heart." Jaques soon leaves the love-sick youth in disgust. Thereupon Rosalind steps from behind the tree and addresses Orlando. Not seeing through her disguise, Orlando is charmed with her wit and cleverness. When the supposed page offers to cure him by impersonating Rosalind and letting him make love to his heart's content, Orlando consents to the experiment, though averring that his malady is incurable.

In *scene 4* Touchstone makes love to Audrey, a stupid and slovenly country wench, overheard by the ever-present Jaques. When Sir Oliver Martext, an unattached vicar, appears Touchstone asks him to marry them, which he will not do without some one to give away the bride. Jaques volunteers for this service, but dissuades Touchstone from what seems to be an irregular marriage. The Jester thereupon decides to postpone the wedding.

*Scene 4* finds Rosalind lamenting to Celia that Orlando is late in keeping an appointment with her. Celia at first laughs at her but ends by comforting her. We learn from the conversation that Rosalind has seen her father, the exiled duke, but has not made her presence known. Corin enters and offers to conduct them to a place where they can overhear a young shepherd make love to his lass.

Accordingly, in *scene 5*, they listen to Silvius pleading with Phebe. She is unmoved, although he declares that the time will come when, having learned what it

is to love in vain, she will pity his sorrows. Rosalind now comes forward and chides Phebe for her hard-heartedness. Phebe, taking Rosalind for what she seems, a most comely page, falls instantly in love. When Rosalind has departed, to soothe Silvius's jealousy, Phebe proposed to write a letter to the page, rebuking him for his impertinence, and asks Silvius to deliver it.

**Act IV.**—*Scene 1* opens with a conversation between Rosalind, Celia, and Jaques, in which the latter discourses on his melancholy. He leaves when Orlando appears. After reproaching Orlando for being late, Rosalind proceeds with the proposed "cure." Orlando finds no difficulty in making love to the fascinating youth. When Rosalind suggests a mock marriage, Celia performs the ceremony merrily. Soon afterwards Orlando leaves to keep an appointment with the duke, but promises to return in two hours' time.

In *scene 2* the foresters sing a song to celebrate the killing of a deer by one of their company.

When the two hours have passed, Rosalind and Celia (*scene 3*) appear for the meeting with Orlando. Instead comes Silvius with the letter from Phebe. Pretending to believe that Silvius has written the letter himself, Rosalind ridicules its flattering phrases, and tells the shepherd to take back to Phebe the answer, "If she loves me, I bid her love thee."

When he has gone, Oliver enters inquiring where he may find a youth whom Orlando calls "Rosalind." Upon learning that he has found the one whom he was seeking, he tells how Orlando came upon him sleeping under a tree with a serpent coiled about his neck, while a lion

crouched, ready to spring at the first sign of life. Although recognizing his brother, Orlando killed the lion and saved Oliver's life. The brothers were thus reconciled, just before Orlando fainted because of loss of blood from a wound received from the lion. Upon his recovery he sent Oliver to Rosalind with his handkerchief dipped in his own blood, as a reason why he could not keep his appointment. Rosalind faints at sight of the blood, but immediately recovering bids Oliver tell his brother how well the page can simulate a swoon.

**Act V.**—*Scene 1* is an amusing encounter between William, a former suitor of Audrey, and Touchstone, in which the Jester mockingly upbraids the shepherd for his stupidity, and declares his losing of Audrey is his own fault. Audrey is a stolid witness to this conversation.

In *scene 2*, Oliver tells Orlando of his love for Celia (whom he knows as Aliena) and his resolve to turn shepherd and marry her at once. As Oliver departs, Rosalind enters, and, after expressing sympathy for Orlando's wound, reports that Celia and Oliver are to be married to-morrow in presence of the duke. Noting Orlando's envious look, the page hints that he may be able by magic arts to bring Rosalind to the forest to-morrow, ready to wed him. Hereupon enter Silvius and Phebe. The latter upbraids the page for showing her letter, and Rosalind explains that it was done on purpose, as Silvius alone is worthy of her love. After some love-lorn talk by all present, Rosalind declares that if she ever marries woman it will be Phebe, and Phebe promises that if she refuses to marry the page to-morrow she will marry Silvius.

*Scene 3* contains a delightful song sung to Touchstone and Audrey by one of the duke's pages.

*Scene 4* reveals the duke and his friends assembled for the fourfold wedding. Rosalind, still disguised as a page, gains the duke's consent to bestow his daughter upon Orlando. She also asks Orlando whether he will marry Rosalind and makes Phebe repeat her promise to wed either the page or Silvius. She then departs with Celia, under pretext of summoning Rosalind by her magic arts.

While they are gone, the Jester and his shepherdess come in, ready for the wedding. Jaques and Touchstone have a bantering conversation in which the Jester explains about the various kinds of insults and which kind should call forth a challenge for a duel.

Hymen, god of marriage, now appears, escorting Celia and Rosalind in woman's garb. The duke and Orlando are delighted, but poor Phebe is sorely amazed at the transformation. However, true to her word, she forgets her infatuation and agrees to marry Silvius.

At the conclusion of the quadruple marriage ceremony, Orlando's second brother appears. He announces that the usurping duke, having set out to pursue and slay his brother, met a holy hermit in the Forest, who converted him from his evil ways, and persuaded him to make full restitution of the usurped estates, and retire into a monastery.

The rightful duke now decrees that Orlando shall have not only his daughter but his duchy as well, and that Oliver shall regain his estates. Jaques declares that he will leave the company and join the converted usurper

in his cell, declining the duke's invitation to remain with him in the Forest. The duke now orders the festivities to proceed.

### THE CHARACTERS

Perhaps the chief source of our delight in *As You Like It* is in the characters. They are many and varied and most of them exceedingly life-like. Contrasting traits are clearly brought out in such pairing as the two dukes, Oliver and Orlando, Rosalind and Celia, Touchstone and Jaques, and other similar groups. The main characters are very complex in their dispositions, and while it is easy enough to appreciate and enjoy them, it is sometimes difficult to analyze them. A careful study of the following quotations from prominent critics will help in understanding the greatness of Shakespeare's portrayals.

#### Rosalind

"*Rosalind* is one of the most charming of Shakespeare's women. Perhaps she reminds us more of Beatrice than of any other, and yet she is not wholly like her. She is as witty, as piquant, as vivacious, but she has a loveliness and a fascination all her own. In her disguise, though she wears it naturally and easily—quite unlike Viola, for instance, who is not altogether at ease in it—she does not lose her feminine sweetness and delicacy. She has sometimes been criticised as a trifle too free in her talk; but in this respect it is easy to do injustice to any of Shakespeare's women. . . . Rosalind has a singularly healthy nature—mentally and morally no less than physically: she is sound and sweet in heart, as

she is fair of face. How admirably she puts to flight the melancholy Jaques with his self-petted sentimentality, his traveled affection and conceit!"—*Rolfe*.

### Celia

"*Celia* is more quiet and retired: but she rather yields to Rosalind, than is eclipsed by her. She is as full of sweetness, kindness, and intelligence, quite as susceptible, and almost as witty, though she makes less display of wit. She is described as less fair and less gifted; yet the attempt to excite in her mind a jealousy of her lovelier friend, by placing them in comparison—

Thou art a fool; she robs thee of thy name;  
And thou wilt show more bright, and even seem more  
    virtuous,  
When she is gone—

fails to awaken in the generous heart of Celia any other feeling than an increased tenderness and sympathy for her cousin. To her Shakespeare has given some of the most striking and animated parts of the dialogue."—*Mrs. Jameson*.

### Orlando

"*Orlando* is altogether such a piece of young manhood as it does one's heart good to be with. He has no special occasion for heroism, yet we feel that there is plenty of heroic stuff in him. Brave, gentle, modest, and magnanimous; never thinking of his high birth but to avoid dishonoring it; in his noble-heartedness forgetting, and causing others to forget, his nobility of rank, he is in every way just such a young man as all true men would choose for their best friend. His persecuting brother,



talking to himself, describes him as 'never schooled, and yet learned; full of noble device; of all sorts enchantingly beloved; and indeed so much in the heart of the world, and especially of my own people, who best know him, that I am altogether misprised'; and this description is amply justified by his behavior. The whole intercourse between him and the faithful old retainer Adam is replete on both sides with that full-souled generosity in whose eye the nobilities of nature are always sure of recognition."—*Hudson*.

### Touchstone

"*Touchstone* is the professional humorist, the court-jester, the Fool of medieval society, who uses his folly as a stalking horse, and under the presentation of that, 'shoots his wit.' His conventional wit is set over against the natural wit of Rosalind and is conquered by it. In his encounter with her, he is reduced to silence; but he expresses his defeat with charm. 'You have said; but whether wisely or no, let the forest judge.' Outside of his profession he is a 'human person.' He is gentle with Rosalind. He loves Celia, and would go over the world with her. He is faithful as the day to her and Rosalind."—*Stopford Brooke*.

### Jaques

"*Jaques* is the great enigma of the play; and it is curious that there should be such a diversity of opinion concerning him. According to some critics, he is 'a perfectly harmless though utterly useless man, a philosopher with something of the fool in him, as Touchstone is a fool with something of the philosopher in him.' Others, on

the other hand, believe him to be unmitigatedly depraved—a worn-out, misanthropic old profligate, introduced as a marked contrast to Orlando, Rosalind, and the banished Duke.”—*Rolfe*.

## CONSTRUCTION OF THE PLAY

Each of the plays of Shakespeare is divided into five acts, and the acts into a variable number of scenes. This division was not made by Shakespeare himself, but by some of his editors. The division into acts is merely mechanical, to allow the audience periods of rest, to give the actors time for change of costume, and to facilitate change of scenery and properties. The division into scenes, however, is more organic. According to the English custom, a scene ends whenever the stage is cleared of characters, and so marks a distinct unit of the action.

Every play, however, has a logical five-part structure, with no reference to the divisions into five acts. These five parts are called Introduction, Rising Action, Turning Point or Climax, Rising Action, and dénouement or Catastrophe.

**The Introduction** must tell clearly and briefly what the audience must know to follow the ensuing story intelligently; it thus usually contains the “antecedent matter.” It must also make clear who the speakers are, and prepare the hearer to expect and recognize those who are to enter later. It must give some hint as to the time and place of the story. In addition it often gives the emotional key-note or atmosphere of the play, so that the hearer enters into the proper mood to appreciate

it. In *As You Like It* the Introduction is all crowded into scene 1, and is done in a masterly way. We learn the facts about the situation in the De Boys family and the usurpation of Duke Frederick. We are introduced to nearly all the leading characters, and hear another (the banished Duke) mentioned. The pervading atmosphere of the play, however, we do not get until Act II, scene 1.

**The Rising Action** immediately follows the Introduction and begins with the *exciting force*; that is, the force that is to change the existing state of affairs and start the action toward a complication, which is in turn worked out to a logical conclusion. The "exciting force" in this play is the wrestling match; for as a result of it Rosalind and Orlando, with Celia, Touchstone, and Adam, and later Oliver, are forced to run away to the Forest of Arden, where the banished Duke is. The Rising Action, sometimes called the "complication," continues involving the characters more and more in difficulties until a complete tangle is achieved.

**The Climax** now is reached. It is the centre of the plot, "the turning point" at which starts the unraveling of the perplexing situations that have been brought about. In Shakespeare's plays this is almost invariably in the exact middle of the play; in *As You Like It* it is in Act III, scene 2, when the disguised Rosalind and Orlando meet in Arden. From this point on we hurry to the final solution.

**The Falling Action**, also called the "resolution," is the clearing up of the complications which the "exciting force" brought about. It includes everything to the closing situations of the play. In *As You Like It* new ele-

ments of interest, in the love affairs of Touchstone and Audrey, Oliver and Celia, and Silvius and Phebe (though the latter is hinted at before the climax) are introduced; but these are sufficiently identified with the main theme (the love of Rosalind and Orlando) to seem quite in place.

**The Dénouement**, or catastrophe, is the final stroke which puts a satisfactory conclusion to the various threads of the plot. In our play it includes the fourfold marriage, the news of the usurper's reformation, and the Duke's allotment of rewards.

**Seven Threads of Action.**—In constructing the plot of the play, Shakespeare has woven together seven threads of action. Listed separately they are:

1. The banishment of the Duke by his usurping brother, who subsequently reforms.
2. The quarrel and reconciliation of Oliver and Orlando.
3. The woodland life of the exiles.
4. The love story of Rosalind and Orlando.
5. The love story of Touchstone and Audrey.
6. The love story of Phebe and Silvius.
7. The love story of Oliver and Celia.

The following *analysis of the plot* by R. G. Moulton gives a good view of the interrelation of the stories:

*Outer Enveloping Action:* Civil War of the Dukes—end in religious conversion.

*Inner Enveloping Action:* Feud in the De Boys family—end in dramatic conversion.

*Main Plot  
of quadruple  
Loves*

1. Love and Disguise: Rosalind and Orlando.
2. Love and Folly: Audrey and Touchstone.
3. Conventional Love: Phebe and Silvius.
4. Love at first sight: Celia and Oliver.

*Inner Atmosphere: Play of*

*Triple Humor*

- Natural: Rosalind.  
Professional: Touchstone.  
Morbid: Jaques.

*Outer Atmosphere: Conventional Pastoral Life: The Forest of Arden.*

## STYLE

*As You Like It* is written partly in prose and partly in blank verse, the total number of lines of the former exceeding that of the latter. Hudson distinguishes two kinds of prose—that spoken by Touchstone, Audrey, and William, representing the speech of servants and country folk, and the witty, sparkling prose of Rosalind's conversations, suggestive of the court. The one has an idiomatic strength and the other a grace and beauty which show that Shakespeare was as great a master of prose as of poetry. Of the poetry Rolfe says: "In *As You Like It* . . . we have the utmost perfection of blank verse; at once finished and flowing, artistically musical, yet seeming to 'sing itself'—the art of the accomplished minstrel, while it impresses us as the artlessness of the lark or the nightingale."

*Two chief characteristics* of Shakespeare's style—of

his prose and poetry alike—are often pointed out. (1) *Condensation*, the expression of a thought in the fewest possible words. An example is in Act II, scene 7, when the "First Lord," being bidden to summon Jaques, replies, "He saves my labor by his own approach." Shakespeare here compresses into eight words what we should probably express thus, "He saves me the labor of looking for him by coming of his own accord." (2) *Concreteness*, the expressing of an idea, not by abstract, intellectual phrases, but by means of concrete images. Thus when the Duke, in Act II, scene 1, says their forest life

Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brook,  
Sermons in stones . . .

he expresses concretely what a prosaic writer might put into some such words as, "Our life, contemplating all the various manifestations of Nature, finds much opportunity for moralizing."

**Famous Passages** of the play are:

The Duke's speech, "Sweet are the uses of adversity," II, 1, 12-18.

Jaques's "Seven ages of man," II, 7, 139ff.

The songs: Under the greenwood tree, II, 5, 1-40.

Blow thou winter wind, II, 7, 174ff.

It was a lover and his lass, V, 3, 16ff.

Rosalind's description of the different paces of time, III, 2, 320ff.

Rosalind's description of a man in love, III, 2, 390ff.

Touchstone's description of a lie seven times removed, V, 4, 70ff.

## SPECIAL NOTES

(As aids to the student in answering some of the questions following.)

1. Aside from its humor, *As You Like It* attracts the reader by its beautiful poetry, the simplicity and grace of its prose, the songs which accompany the action, the unusually large number of interesting and lifelike characters, the care-free life under the greenwood tree, and the final pervading spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation which gives the play a joyous ending. Not the least feature of the play is the melancholy of Jaques, which is so puzzling and stimulating to the thoughtful reader.

2. There is little change or development of character in this play as compared with many others of Shakespeare's, but the change in Rosalind's mood from sadness in the opening scenes to joyousness when she arrives in Arden is noteworthy. Then, too, there are the changes in Oliver and the usurping duke. The reformation of Oliver has been criticised as too abrupt and improbable, but gratitude for the saving of life is often the cause of as great a transformation in real life, to say nothing of the force of an overwhelming love. In the case of Duke Frederick, the opportunity for reflection in the lapse of time, and the workings of conscience account sufficiently for his reformation.

3. Viola, in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, like Rosalind was disguised as a boy. While Rosalind seemed to find delight in her masquerade, and boast in the freedom and independence which it brought her, Viola, on the other hand, never felt quite at home, and her maidenly modesty was rendered more retiring thereby. Viola's wit was of a quieter and perhaps more subtle quality than Rosalind's and lacked the latter's gaiety and irrepressible spirits. In beauty there could be little to choose between them: Orlando succumbed to love at first sight, and Olivia, believing Viola to be a youth, fell almost instant prey to beauty's charms. Mrs. Jameson, in her *Characteristics of Women*, thus contrasts them:

"What beautiful propriety in the distinction drawn between Rosalind and Viola! The wild sweetness, the frolic humor which

sports free and unblamed amid the shades of Arden, would ill become Viola, whose playfulness is assumed as part of her disguise as a court-page, and is guarded by the strictest delicacy. She has not, like Rosalind, a saucy enjoyment in her own incognito; her disguise does not sit so easily upon her; her heart does not beat freely under it. . . . A sweet consciousness of her feminine nature is forever breaking through her masquerade."

4. Read carefully the views on life in the Forest as expressed by Duke Senior and Amiens in Act II, sc. 1; by Jaques as reported by the First Lord in the same scene; by Touchstone in Act II, sc. 4, line 10, and Act III, sc. 2, line 12; by Corin, a native, in the same scene; and by Amiens in the song, Act II, sc. 5.

5. There are four chief ways by which an author may depict character. (1) He may *describe* the person, telling us what he looked like, what were the traits of his mind and character, and portray his thoughts, desires, and emotions. (2) He may make the character speak, and thus allow us to *infer* his nature from what he says. (3) He may show us what the person does, how he *acts* and conducts himself in various situations, and thus enable us to form our own estimate. (4) He may tell us what *other persons* in the narrative say or think about him.

6. Character sketches of Rosalind, Celia, and others will be found on pages 13 to 15. It is often desirable, however, to be able to give a detailed and specific analysis of characteristics. The following outline, with references to the scenes of the play in which various traits are brought out, should be studied carefully.

### Rosalind

(1) *Pensiveness*, or *sadness*. In Act I only, due first to her father's banishment, and later to her falling in love with Orlando at first sight. Study scene 2, lines 1-40, and scene 3, lines 1-40.

(2) *Wit*. See especially her talk with Touchstone and Le Beau, Act I, scene 2, and her raillery at Phebe's letter, Act IV, scene 3, lines 1-75.

(3) Her most characteristic trait is variously called *sprightliness*, *playfulness*, *vivacity*, and *cheerfulness*. It pervades nearly



all her talk, but see especially the conversations with Celia about Orlando in Act III, scene 2, lines 170-265; with Orlando in Act III, scene 3, lines 312 to end; and with Orlando, Act IV, scene 1, lines 205-225.

### Celia

(1) *Loyalty* to friendship. This is brought out in Act I, scene 2, lines 12-20, when she vows to right her father's wrong against Rosalind's father; in Act I, scene 3, lines 92-135, when she decides to go into banishment with Rosalind.

(2) *Tender mockery*, when she teases Rosalind about Orlando's verses, Act III, scene 2, lines 170-265; when she laughs at Rosalind's love, Act III, scene 4, lines 1-50.

### Dramatic Terms

7. By *antecedent material* is meant events which happened prior to the beginning of a story or play, and which the reader must be acquainted with in order to understand the plot. In *As You Like It* the antecedent material consists of the usurpation of Duke Frederick, and the state of affairs in the De Boys family which led to the estrangement of the two brothers.

*Climax* in a drama is the point at which the interest is at its greatest height. It is the "big scene" of the play. Before it is reached everything that happens helps to lead up to it; after it, the course of action naturally declines to the catastrophe or dénouement. Often there are other lesser climaxes besides the main one. The word "climax" is sometimes used synonymously with "turning point," which means the point where the fortunes of the chief character change from good to bad or from bad to good. "The center of the plot" is another term used in the same sense. In *As You Like It*, this point, by whichever word you choose to call it, is in Act III, scene 2, where Orlando and the disguised Rosalind meet for the first time.

A *moment of suspense* is a situation by which our interest is kept fully aroused and expectant, eager to witness the important event for which we have been carefully prepared by the skill of the author. We are kept for a moment poised, as it were, on the verge of a leap into an exciting incident. Such

a situation, for example, is the conversation of Rosalind, Celia, and Orlando, just before the wrestling match.

A *retarding force* is an incident which momentarily retards the action, which seems to interfere with its progress toward a culmination we have been expecting. A "*moment of suspense*" also delays the coming of the expected incident, but by it our interest in the incident and eagerness for it is heightened; whereas by a *retarding force*, our attention is for a time distracted to something else. An example is the song in Act IV, scene 2, which intervenes when we are expecting to witness the second meeting of the lovers.

*Contrast in characterization* means the bringing together of persons of opposite or dissimilar nature so that interesting situations develop from the interplay of their conflicting minds or interests. Several groups of contrasted characters are found in *As You Like It*; as the two dukes, Orlando and Oliver, Rosalind and Celia, Touchstone and Jaques, etc.

The *setting* of a story or drama is the time and place in which the events are supposed to happen. The former is often called the *historical*, the latter the *local*, or *geographical* setting. Often, in a play the scenes occur in various different local settings; as a street, a room in a palace, an orchard, etc. In *As You Like It*, the historical setting may be said to be an indeterminate period, probably contemporary with Shakespeare; the local setting is, in general, a Duke's palace and the Forest of Arden, France. The setting of a play often forms one of the chief sources of interest; this is notably true in this play, where most of the action takes place out-of-doors "under the green-wood tree."

*Sequence of time* means the chronological order in which the incidents of the play or story are presented. In a play this is usually, of course, the same as that in which they would naturally happen, but not always. For instance, in *As You Like It*, scene 3 of Act II, and scene 1 of Act III seem to be out of their natural order. In a study of the sequence of time, it is always necessary to observe the rapidity or slowness with which the events follow one another, and to take account of any intervals between successive scenes. In this play, there are evi-

dently intervals in the action after Act II, scene 1, Act II, scene 2, Act II, scene 7, and Act III, scene 2.

### QUESTIONS FROM COLLEGE ENTRANCE AND REGENTS' EXAMINATIONS

(The numerals after some of the questions refer to the "Special Notes" above, where suggestions are given to aid in answering the questions.)

#### College Entrance

(1) For what qualities other than its humor do you find one of Shakespeare's comedies attractive (1)?

(2) Select from some great novel or play a person who undergoes a striking change of character, and show why and how this change takes place (2).

(3) Write a composition of at least two paragraphs on: Orlando in the Forest of Arden.

(4) What makes *As You Like It* a gay and lively play?

(5) Write a comparison between Rosalind and Viola with respect to their devotion, independence, beauty, wit, or other qualities (3).

(6) Supposing yourself to be Orlando, write a letter to some one at Court, describing the people to be met in the Forest of Arden, and setting forth the advantages of woodland life over life at court.

(7) Write a composition on "Life under the greenwood tree," as viewed by different characters (4).

(8) The character of Jaques—show how he differs from other minor characters in the play.

(9) Do you think that Shakespeare is successful in making his minor characters seem real and distinct? Illustrate your answer by examples as fully as you can.

#### Regents'

(1) What traits of character are shown by Rosalind in her deeds in the Forest of Arden (6)?

(2) Mention three traits of Celia's character, illustrating by reference to the play (6).

(3) Mention four ways of depicting character in a play or

novel. Mention *one* method which the novelist may use but which the dramatist may not use (6).

(4) Relate briefly Rosalind's love-story, using the following outline: (a) Conditions under which the story begins, (b) Rosalind's first meeting with Orlando, (c) events in the progress of the story, (d) the outcome.

(5) Write a paragraph describing a character in *As You Like It*, basing your estimate of that character on *one* of the following: (a) what he (or she) does, (b) what he says, (c) how he feels towards the other characters in the story, (d) how other characters feel toward him, (e) what he holds highest.

(6) Bring out a "moment of suspense" and a "climax" in two different scenes in *Merchant of Venice* or *As You Like It* (7).

(7) What is meant by "setting" in fiction? Illustrate by reference to a novel or play (7)

(8) Prepare an outline and use it in writing the story of the masquerade of *either* Portia *or* Rosalind.

(9) Point out the difference between the method of character portrayal in the novel and that used in the drama.

(10) Illustrate by characterizing *two* of the following and stating the basis on which you determine the leading traits of character: Viola, Rosalind, Portia, Hepzibah Pyncheon, Eppie, and the Vicar of Wakefield's wife (5).

(11) Name *five* persons from *one* of the following plays and mention the most striking traits of character of *each* of these persons: *As You Like It*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night*.

(12) With regard to Rosalind relate the circumstances that led her to disguise herself as a man and give one or two instances to show how her womanliness appears in her speech or acts while she is disguised.

(13) In a paragraph or two describe fully and clearly a picture that might serve as an important illustration for an edition of *As You Like It*.

(14) What scene in *As You Like It* can you see most vividly? Reproduce your impression so that the examiner will see what you see.

(15) Explain how the wrestling match aids in the plot development of *As You Like It*.

(16) Write a narrative—as though the reader had not read the book: (a) How an unkind brother was reconciled to a brother he had wronged. (b) How one who lost his dukedom found happiness elsewhere.

(17) Compare Rosalind and Celia, basing your comparison on what they say and do (6).

(18) What traits of character are shown by Rosalind in her companionship with Celia? Give reasons for your opinion (6).

(19) Compare *As You Like It* with some other one of Shakespeare's plays that you have read, showing as clearly as you can the most striking points of difference between the plays.

(20) What is the most noticeable trait of Rosalind's character? Tell what she said and what she did that best reveal this trait (6).

(21) Give from *The Virginians*, *Merchant of Venice*, or *As You Like It*, illustrations of five of the following: moment of suspense, antecedent material, setting, contrast in characterization or in incident, climax, retarding force, sequence of time. Make each illustration as detailed as possible (7).

(22) Write on one of the following, giving the story of the characters and showing how the subplot strengthens the plot: (a) Oliver and Celia, (b) Silvius and Phebe, (c) Touchstone and Audrey.

(23) Define "antecedent material." Mention two different ways in which it may be given in a narrative and illustrate each by reference to antecedent material in *As You Like It* (7).

(24) Mention three threads of action in *As You Like It*, naming all the characters connected with each. Describe a scene in the play in which two or more threads are combined.

(25) Quote from one of Shakespeare's plays one or two passages containing a total of at least 100 words. Give the name of the speaker and state under what circumstances the words were spoken.

(26) From one of the following select the character that impressed you the most, tell the part the character plays in the drama and give the circumstances that make him (or her) worth remembering: *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *Merchant of Venice*.

(27) Name the title and author of two plays that you have studied in your English course. Name a principal and a minor character from *each* of these plays.

(28) Tell what *each* of these characters does in the play.

(29) If you were to see on the stage one of the plays studied in your English course, what scene would you expect to enjoy most? Describe the scene so as to show why you would enjoy it.

### SUGGESTIVE REVIEW QUESTIONS AND COMMENT

**Act I.**—From the conversation between Orlando and Adam, and between Orlando and Oliver, what details do we learn about the affairs of the De Boys family? Just what facts do we learn about the usurpation of Duke Frederick, and how do we learn them? What was Charles's reason for asking Oliver to keep Orlando out of the wrestling match? How did Oliver persuade him to meet Orlando? What do Rosalind and Celia say to Orlando before and after the bout? What is the effect on Rosalind and Orlando of their first meeting? What far-reaching effects, in the development of the plot, did the wrestling match have? What trait of Rosalind's character is predominate in Act I? What trait does Celia chiefly reveal? What are Orlando's chief characteristics? Oliver's? The usurping duke's? How does Celia describe her father? What have you learned about Touchstone's character in Act I? Show that the plot of the play is to be the result of the conflict between "good" persons and "bad" persons.

**Act II.**—How does the exiled duke compare his present life with that of the court? What do the courtiers think of Jaques? Why is he called the "melancholy Jaques"? What more do we learn about the flight of Rosalind and Celia? About Orlando's actions after the match? How does Touchstone try to cheer up Rosalind and Celia on their arrival at Arden? Why are they made to overhear the story of Silvius's love immediately upon their arrival? What important fact do they learn from Corin? Why is Amiens's song introduced here (sc. 5)? What does it show as to the exiles' attitude toward their present life? Describe Orlando's entry to the banqueters and their reception of him. What is hereby shown as to the Duke's character? Can

you give reasons why Jaques's speech on the "Seven Ages of Man" is so famous and popular? Compare the spirit of Amiens's song in scene 7 with that in scene 5. What is the reason for the difference? Why do we hear no more of Adam after the end of this Act? What do we naturally expect to happen, now that Orlando and Rosalind are both in the Forest? What events in Act II confirm what we learned in Act I, or were the result of what happened in Act I? What new (minor) thread is introduced, not hinted at in Act I?

**Act III.**—Why is it necessary for the scene to revert to Duke Frederick's palace? What means does the author adopt for getting Oliver to Arden? What is Touchstone's opinion of a shepherd's life? Explain Corin's philosophy. What does Touchstone say of Corin's never having been to Court? Is Corin's reply a good one? How does the discovery of the verses affect Rosalind? What does Touchstone think of them? What questions does Rosalind ask Celia about Orlando? What does Celia reply? What characteristics of the two men are revealed by Jaques's suggestion that "we two rail against the world," etc., and Orlando's reply? How does Rosalind describe a man in love? How does Orlando confess his love? How does this confession affect Rosalind? What is her cure for one in love? How would you describe Rosalind during her talk with Orlando? Show that this meeting (sc. 2) is the "center of the plot" or "climax" of the play. Show its relation to what happened in Act I. Why is Touchstone's wooing of Audrey humorous? How many love affairs have we up to this point in the play? Why does Jaques take a hand in this affair? Why does he offer to give away the bride, and then dissuade Touchstone from the ceremony? What are Touchstone's reasons for postponing the wedding? Was Sir Oliver Martext a necessary character in the play? Does he appear again? In scene 4, is Celia teasing Rosalind, or trying to comfort her? Why does Shakespeare make Orlando late for the appointment? What does Rosalind say about her father? Why does Rosalind chide Phebe for her cruelty to Silvius? What effect does she really have on Phebe? Why are we amused at Phebe's falling in love with "Ganymede"? Show how this further complicates the plot. How

does Phebe's manner differ toward Silvius after Rosalind's scolding? Why? How does Phebe describe "Ganymede"? How does she try to re-assure Silvius? Show how the mention of the letter points forward to future interesting situations. What new elements of interest are introduced in Act III? What progress is made towards the "resolution," or working out of the forces set in motion in Act I?

**Act IV.**—Rosalind here (sc. 1) matches her wit with Jaques's. Review how she does the same with Touchstone's in Act I, scene 2, and elsewhere; also how Jaques and Touchstone match wits in Act V, scene 4. How does the conversation between Rosalind and Orlando in this scene differ from that in Act III, scene 2? What progress in the love-making has been made? Is Celia really tired of and disgusted with Rosalind as she seems? What is Rosalind's attitude toward Phebe as she reads the letter? Can you account for this attitude? What hint of a future complication is there in the message Rosalind sends to Phebe by Silvius? Why is the encounter between Orlando and Oliver *told* instead of being acted on the stage? Previous to Rosalind's fainting, what other instances have we had of her femininity breaking through her disguise? Is there any hint here of Oliver's falling in love with Celia?

**Act V.**—Try to enjoy to the full Touchstone's foolery with William; it is one of the best instances of the Jester's wit. Why did Touchstone succeed so easily in winning Audrey from William? Give Rosalind's description of the case of love at first sight between Oliver and Celia. Why does this case seem less probable than the case of Rosalind and Orlando? Why does Rosalind promise to use "magical arts" to bring about Orlando's marriage? Give Silvius's description of love. Explain the full significance of Rosalind's expression, "Nor I for any woman." Give in full what she promises to each for the morrow. What hints of recognition of Rosalind do the duke and Orlando give near the beginning of scene 4? Study carefully Touchstone's description of the seven causes of a quarrel; it is his best bit of "professional fooling." What is his real opinion of Audrey? How many marriages does Hymen perform? Review the story of each. Is the usurper's sudden



reformation more or less improbable than Oliver's? Why does Jaques take it upon himself to hand out the final destinies of the characters? Does the play end *as you like it*? Why does Rosalind in the Epilogue say, "If I were a woman"?

### BIOGRAPHICAL

The facts actually known about Shakespeare's life can be told briefly. He was born in 1564, probably on April 23, at Stratford-on-Avon. As a boy he attended the Grammar School at Stratford, where he studied Latin, as the custom was in that day, and probably not much else. But he must have been a great reader, and the English Bible he knew almost by heart. He never attended the Universities, as many of his fellow-playwrights did, and the vast knowledge he displays on so many different subjects must have come to him from reading, observation, and intercourse with men and nature. At the age of eighteen he married Anne Hathaway, and three children were born to them. Soon after his marriage he left Stratford and went to London. Tradition says he ran away from home as a result of stealing a deer from the park of Sir Thomas Lucy and the subsequent persecution by that gentleman—a story which modern critics are inclined to doubt.

In London he first became an actor of minor parts in the theatres. In this way he gradually learned the whole business of the theatre, soon revising old plays, then making new ones of his own, and finally owning and managing playhouses. He was a shrewd business man and soon acquired a competent fortune. In 1597 he bought a handsome house in Stratford, and retired from the theatrical business about 1611 and went there to live. He died April 23, 1616, and was buried in the chancel of Stratford church.

In London, unlike most of his fellow-poets, he was highly respected and led a blameless though joyous life. His contemporaries, except the envious Greene, spoke of him in the highest terms. In his comparatively short career as an author, he wrote the greatest dramas ever written by man. He is universally recognized by all nations as the world's greatest poet.

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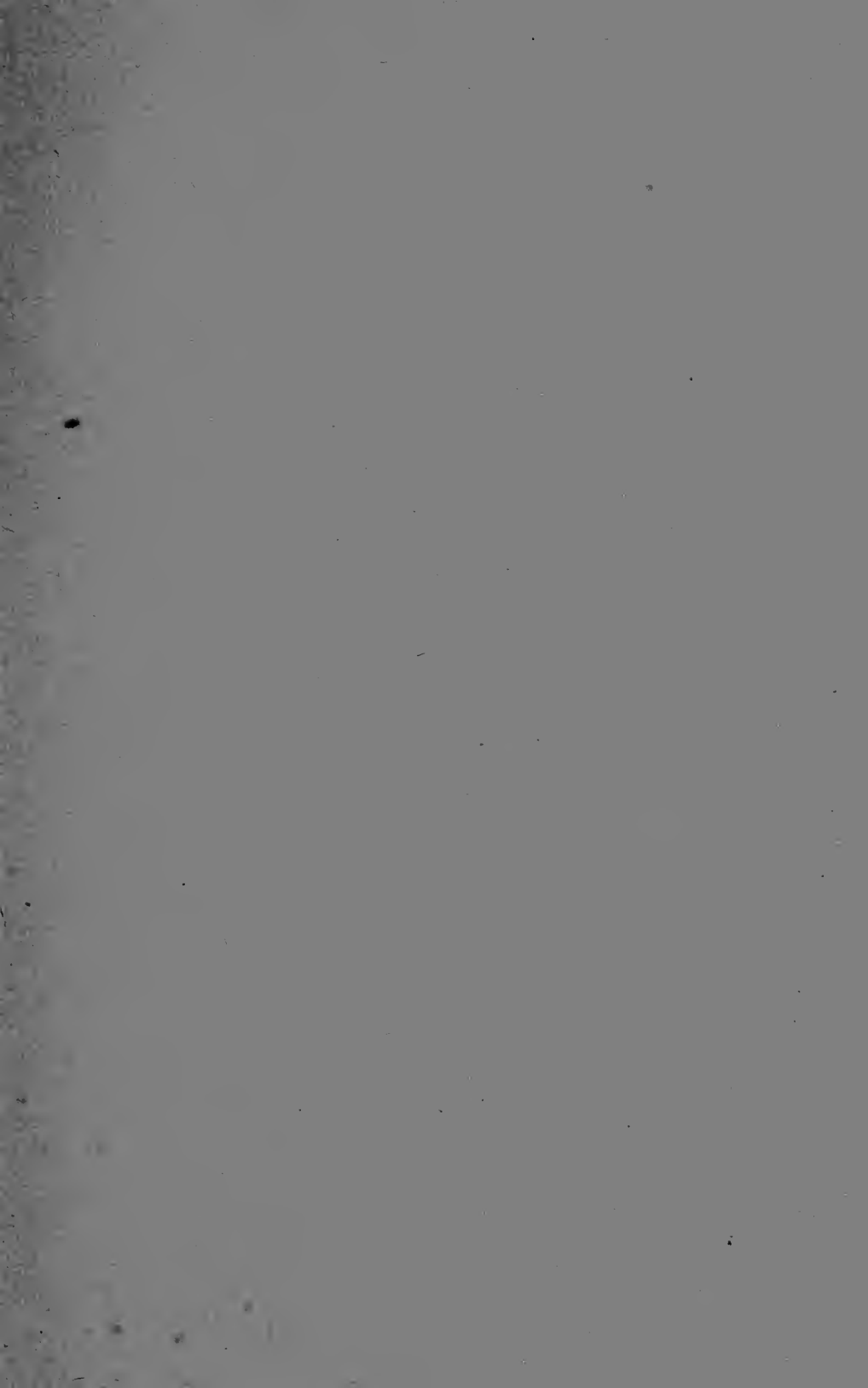
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(The last two books contain interesting studies of *As You Like It*.)



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